REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicant has amended the claims to place them in better form grammatically, without limiting their scope.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,445,437 to Miyazaki et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the features of the present invention are not disclosed (or suggested) in the cited reference. More specifically, the Miyazaki et al. reference fails to disclose (or suggest) a pillar spacer provided such that a region having an alignment defect of the liquid crystal is formed across adjoining ones of the pixel regions, as defined in independent Claim 1. Nor does Miyazaki et al. disclose (or suggest) a pillar spacer provided such that it protrudes from the light shielding film into adjoining ones of the pixel regions when viewed in a direction perpendicular to the surface of the base substrate, as defined in independent Claim 9.

The spacer 33 shown in Figs. 19-20 of Miyazaki et al. is disposed upstream in the orientation direction of the TFT light shielding area 36, whereby the orientation scatter 44 can be absorbed within a non-influential portion upon the pixels by making the use of the TFT light shielding area 36 (See column 15, lines 28-32 of Miyazaki et al.). As shown in Figs. 19-20, the orientation scatter 44 caused by the spacer 33 is not formed across adjoining ones of the pixel regions, but is formed in the TFT light shielding area 36. That is, the spacer

33 is not provided such that a region having an alignment defect of the liquid crystal is formed across adjoining ones of the pixel regions.

The spacer 33 shown in Figs. 22-23 of Miyazaki et al. is disposed in such a position that a green color layer 32G is not adjacent to the downstream portion of the spacer in the orientation direction indicated by an arrow in order for the orientation defective area 57 caused by the spacer 33 not to spread into the green color layer 32G (See column 17, lines 2-7 of Miyazaki). As shown in Figs. 22-23, the orientation defective area 57 caused by the spacer 33 is not formed across adjoining ones of the pixel regions, but is only formed in the blue color layer 32B. That is, the spacer 33 is not provided such that a region having an alignment defect of the liquid crystal is formed across adjoining ones of the pixel regions.

According to the feature of the present invention of independent Claims 1 and 9, a region having a liquid crystal alignment defect is formed around a pillar spacer (such as pillar spacer 18 of Applicant's Figure 2A) because of the influence of the spacer itself, and a region having an alignment defect is uniformly distributed among a plurality of pixel regions to make an irregularity of display less visually perceptible, which makes is possible to suppress degradation of display characteristics (See page 11, lines 24-28 and page 12, lines 1-2 of the present specification).

On the other hand, in the spacer 33 of Miyazaki et al., a region having a liquid crystal alignment defect is not formed around the spacer 33, and a region having an alignment defect is not uniformly distributed among a plurality of pixel regions.

Therefore, Miyazaki fails to disclose (or suggest) all of the features of the invention as defined in independent Claims 1 and 9 claimed in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 9, and associated dependent Claims 2-8, should be allowable.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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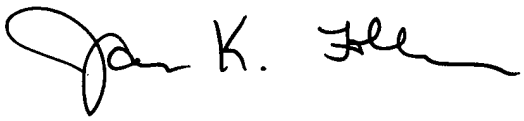

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